THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (g) The Government has not constituted any Study Group to give recommendations on the cost of production of natural rubber. However, Government has been announcing revision in the Bench Mark Price of natural rubber (RM-IV and RMA-V grade) based on the cost study report of the Cost Accounts Branch of the Ministry of Finance which makes its recommendations taking into account the increases that have taken place from time to time in the cost of various inputs for production of natural rubber. The Bench Mark Prices for RMA-IV and RMA-V grades have been fixed on 5th January, 1993 at Rs. 23,450 per metric tonne for RMA-IV grade and Rs. 22,950 per metric tonne for RMA-V grade based on the recommendations of the Cost Accounts Branch.

2399. [*Transferred to 18th March, 1993*].

Steps to boost Engineering exports

2400. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the engineering exports target for 1992-93 is likely to be missed;

(b) whether the exports have declined in dollar terms;

(c) if so, what is the extent of decline till December, 1992; and

(d) what steps Government propose to take to boost up engineering export?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) It appears from the trend observed in exports during April 1992—November 1992, that the target set for the year 1992-93 for engineering goods is likely to be achieved.

(b) There has not been any decline in engineering export in dollar terms during the period April 1992—November, 1992 as compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Promotion of exports has been the constant endeavour of the Government. Making available inputs for export production, provision for import of capital goods for export production at concessional import duty in lieu of export obligation, making available export credit at concessive interest rates, exemption of income derived from levy of income-tax, readjustment of exechange rate of rupee, vis-a-vis major currencies of the world, benefit of conversion of entire export earning at market rate of exchange and assistance from Market Development Fund for participation abroad in fairs, buyear-seller meets and other export promotion measures are some of the important constituents of Government's strategy to boost exports.

Suggestions made by the Rubber Board

2401. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Rubber Board has requested the Government not to import natural rubber this year;

(b) if so, what are the reasons that the Board has made such a request; and

(c) what is the reaction of the Government to the Board's suggestion?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.